



# Connecticut State University American Association of University Professors

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1615 Stanley Street • Marcus White Hall, Room 316 • New Britain, CT 06050

Testimony to Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

February 27, 2023  
Louise Blakeney Williams  
CSU-AAUP

In Support of:

**House Bill 5673: An Act Concerning the Reformation of Certain Taxes and Tax Equity.**

Good afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Horn, and the distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. I am testifying in strong support of House Bill 5673: An Act Concerning the Reformation of Certain Taxes and Tax Equity.

I am Louise Williams, President of Connecticut State University, American Association of University Professors. This is the union that represents the 3,000 teaching faculty, librarians, counselors, and coaches who work in the four Connecticut State universities – Central, Eastern Southern, and Western. CSU-AAUP is committed to affordable, quality public higher education and we belong to Recovery For All – a statewide coalition fighting for a better future for everyone in Connecticut.

I also am a Professor of History at Central Connecticut State University. I see first-hand every day how our inequitable tax structure hurts the most vulnerable of our residents. Because of the political decision of our Governor and legislature not to raise taxes on those who can most afford them, every year we are told there is no money to adequately fund for public education. The result is that students who can least afford it are forced to pay higher and higher tuition for fewer services. To pay for tuition, fees, and materials they must work multiple jobs, often with changing schedules and hours. They frequently are forced to miss classes, submit assignments late, and come to school unprepared to learn. They suffer anxiety and depression because of their poor academic performance on top of their financial difficulties, which just make matters worse. Add to this food and housing insecurity, and the lack of adequate free childcare, and college just becomes too much for them. Their grades suffer, they are forced to drop out temporarily or permanently, and even if they are fortunate, their graduation is delayed for years.

And all of this is the result of the unwillingness to make our wealthiest residents pay a tiny fraction more of their income in taxes, which will not impact their lifestyles or cause any suffering, certainly not the struggles that I see my students face every day. Not only is this unfair and unjust, it simply does not make sense. It is well known that residents with a college degree make more money over their lifetimes, and in turn pay more taxes and use less public services, than those who do not. Investing tax dollars to ensure that higher education is affordable for all our residents will expand our tax base for decades to come. On the other hand, if we do not find the money to invest, we fall into a vicious cycle. The underserved majority of our population will never complete a college

degree, so they will never be able to contribute to our state economically to their fullest potential, and in turn we will have even less tax dollars to spend in the future to provide affordable, quality higher education. Businesses will not be able to find qualified employees for specialized jobs and will leave the state, which will reduce our tax income even further. The appalling inequality in our state will just get worse and our economy will stagnate with it. And there will be no way to change this inevitable decline.

It is time to think of long-term solutions, not the short-term complaints of the few who are not suffering. This is why I strongly support the recommendations of the Recovery for All coalition, which include, among other things, a 5% surtax on capital gains, dividends, and taxable interest for individuals earning \$500,000 and joint filers earning \$1 million, extending the surtax to 20% for those earning \$100 million or more, establishing new income tax brackets and rates for incomes over \$1 million, \$10 million and \$25 million, and raising the corporate tax rate to 11.5%.

Now is the time to make these changes. We have a huge budget surplus and tremendous workforce needs. It is essential to change the tax rate and invest in public education from kindergarten through university. I urge the Committee to have the courage to make the right choice and pass House Bill 5673: An Act Concerning the Reformation of Certain Taxes and Tax Equity.

Thank you,

Louise Blakeney Williams  
Professor of History, Central Connecticut State University  
President, CSU-AAUP